

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02

ORM-02 AID-05 SCA-01 HEW-04 /068 W

-----091543Z 110932 /50

R 091438Z FEB 77

FM AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5712

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0194

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOCI SPOP SHUM PINS PINT SF

SUBJ: GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES CONCERTED EFFORT TO ELIMINATE
SQUATTERS; 15,000 FACE EVICTION

REF: CAPE TOWN A-17, MARCH 10, 1976

SUMMARY: SAG PLANS DRIVE TO EVICT SOME 15,000 AFRICAN, COLORED AND INDIAN SQUATTERS FROM THREE CAMPS NEAR CAPE TOWN IN NEAR FUTURE. SAG "PLANS" FOR RELOCATION ARE CONFINED TO EXPRESSING HOPE THAT THEY WILL RETURN TO THEIR AREAS OF ORIGIN. PLAN HAS DRAWN HEAVY CRITICISM FROM OPPOSITION PARTIES AND PRESS. FIRST 5,000 HAVE BEEN SERVED WITH NOTICE AND DESTRUCTION OF SHANTIES TO BEGIN FEB. 17. RESPONSIBLE OBSERVERS FEAR POSSIBILITY OF VIOLENCE IF SQUATTERS ATTEMPT TO RESIST EVICTION FORCIBLY. END SUMMARY.

1. MINISTER OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MARAIS STEYN AT PRESS CONFERENCE FEB. 7 ANNOUNCED CONCERTED EFFORT WOULD BE MOUNTED BY MINISTRIES OF COLORED RELATIONS, BANTU
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ADMINISTRATION, PUBLIC WORKS AND HIS OWN TO "CLEAR UP THE ILLEGAL SQUATTING PROBLEM" IN CAPE PENINSULA WHICH SAG REGARDED "IN A SERIOUS LIGHT." NOTICES WERE SENT FEB. 8 BY PUBLIC WORKS DEPT. (PWD) TO SOME 5,000 SQUATTERS IN MODDERDAM ROAD CAMP WARNING THAT THEIR PRESENCE ILLEGAL AND COULD LEAD TO PROSECUTION AND ORDERING THEM TO MOVE WITHIN SEVEN DAYS. DEMOLITION

OF SHACKS AT THIS CAMP SCHEDULED TAKE PLACE FROM
FEB. 17 TO 25.

2. STEYN SAID AS FURTHER STEP TO COMBAT SQUATTING,
PROCLAMATION WILL BE ISSUED "SOON" MAKING IT AN OFFENCE,
PUNISHABLE BY PRISON SENTENCE OR FINES UP TO R500
(R1.00 - \$1.15), TO EMPLOY "COLOREDS" FROM OUTSIDE
PENINSULA WITHOUT ENSURING THAT EMPLOYEES HAVE PROPER
ACCOMMODATION. SIMILAR RESTRICTIONS ALREADY APPLY IN
TERMS OF AFRICAN WORKERS. STEYN SAID TWO OTHER CAMPS,
HAVING POPULATION OF SOME 10,000 WILL BE SERVED SIMILAR
NOTICES AND CLEARED IN NEAR FUTURE. HE SAID PEOPLE
AFFECTED WERE SQUATTERS WHO HAD MOVED INTO AREA AFTER
NOVEMBER 15, 1974 WHEN GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED "CRASH" HOUSE-
ING PROGRAM AND PROHIBITION ON ERECTION OF ANY ADDITIONAL
SHACKS.

3. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS STEYN SAID HE COULD NOT
SAY WHERE THOSE EVICTED WOULD GO BUT HE HOPED THEY
"WOULD GO BACK TO THE PLACE OF THEIR ORIGIN." IN CASE
OF "COLOREDS" HE SAID THEY COULD NOT BE FORCED TO LEAVE
PENINSULA BUT SAG HAD BEEN ASSURED BY COUNTRY MUNICI-
PALITIES, FROM WHENCE MOST OF THEM COME, THAT EFFORTS
WOULD BE MADE TO FIND ACCOMMODATION FOR THOSE WHO
RETURNED. IN CASE OF AFRICANS, THOSE RESIDING
"ILLEGALLY" (I.E., WITHOUT RESIDENCE PERMITS) IN
CAPE WOULD BE RETURNED TO PLACE OF ORIGIN. THOSE
HERE "LEGALLY" WOULD BE "TEMPORARILY ACCOMMODATED" IN
EXISTING BLACK TOWNSHIPS. VAST MAJORITY OF FAMILIES IN
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ALL THREE CAMPS ARE AFRICANS BUT THERE ARE ROUGHLY
500 COLORED FAMILIES AND A HANDFUL OF INDIAN FAMILIES.
A JOINT STATEMENT BY STEYN AND BANTU AFFAIRS MINISTER
M. C. BOTHA SAID THAT IN VIEW HOUSING SHORTAGE, LOCAL
AUTHORITIES HAD BEEN REQUESTED TO BE "VERY SYMPATHETIC"
TOWARDS ANY RESULTANT OVERCROWDING BECAUSE "OVER-
CROWDING IN A PROPER HOUSE IS BETTER" THAN OVER-
CROWDING IN SHANTIES. IN ADDITION TO 5,000 SHANTIES
TO BE DESTROYED IN THE THREE CAMPS, THE BIG SQUATTER
CAMP AT CROSSROADS (NEAR D.F. MALAN AIRPORT), WITH
ESTIMATED 3,122 STRUCTURES AND AT LEAST 15-16,000
PEOPLE, WOULD BE DEALT WITH LATER. ULTIMATELY, ANOTHER
22,000 SHACKS WOULD HAVE TO BE CLEARED, PROBABLY WITHIN
THE NEXT 5 TO 7 YEARS.

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4. GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT HAS BROUGHT PREDICTABLE OUT-
CRIES FROM OPPOSITION PARTIES (WHO PLAN PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATE IN NEXT FEW DAYS) AND PRESS WITH EDITORIALS
ENTITLED, FOR EXAMPLE, "WHERE DO THEY GO?" OPPONENTS
ARGUE THAT MANY COLORED SQUATTERS CAME TO CAMPS TO
ESCAPE SEVERE OVERCROWDING IN TOWNSHIPS, THAT MANY
AFRICAN FAMILIES HAD BREADWINNER WHO HAD BEEN IN CAPE
TOWN LEGALLY MORE THAN 10 YEARS (WHICH WOULD MAKE HIM
"LEGAL" BUT NOT THEM) AND THAT MANY IN BOTH GROUPS HAD BEEN
ON WAITING LIST FOR HOUSING FOR MORE THAN 5 YEARS.
PARTICULAR OUTRAGE HAS BEEN VOICED BY MEMBERS OF COLORED
REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (CRC), DELEGATION FROM WHICH HAD
APPOINTMENT, PUBLICIZED IN THE PRESS, TO DISCUSS PROBLEM
WITH MINISTER FOR COLORED AFFAIRS AT 4 P.M., FEB. 7,
ONLY TO LEARN OF 3 P.M. PRESS CONFERENCE ANNOUNCING
SAG ACTION PLAN. LABOR PARTY CHIEF WHIP "LOFTY" ADAMS
SAID SAG HAD THEREBY SHOWN "COMPLETE DISDAIN AND CONTEMPT"
FOR CRC.

5. SHOWING NEAR-TOTAL DISREGARD FOR STORM OF
CRITICISM WHICH THIS MOVE PREDICTABLY HAS AND WILL
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AROUSE, SAG APPEARS INTENT ON BULLDOZING AHEAD,
LITERALLY AS WELL AS FIGURATIVELY, WITH INDIFFER-
ENCE TO SUFFERING AND DISRUPTION AT LEAST EQUALLING
THAT DISPLAYED IN FORCING THE REMOVAL OF ALMOST

7,000 COLORED FAMILIES FROM DISTRICT SIX AREA OF
CAPE TOWN SEVERAL YEARS AGO. SQUATTERS IN THE
MODDERDAM CAMP ARE RELATIVELY WELL-ORGANIZED AND
THEIR "ACTION COMMITTEE" HAS INDICATED IT WILL SEEK
LEGAL ADVICE IN EFFORT TO FORESTALL EVICTIONS.
THERE APPEARS LITTLE PROSPECT THAT LEGAL MEANS WILL BE
EFFECTIVE. GIVEN PRESENT ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN AND
HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT, MANY SQUATTERS WILL BE EVEN MORE RELUCTANT

TO BE FORCED OUT. CONCERN AMONG KNOW-
LEDGEABLE OBSERVERS HERE IS THAT AS LAST RESORT
SQUATTERS WILL ATTEMPT FORCIBLY RESIST EVICTION WITH
CONSEQUENT DANGER OF ESCALATING VIOLENCE.
WHITE

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